

Honors Orientation: Redefined

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Casey Schultz

Thesis Advisor

Sarah Haley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Haley', with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

**Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana**

July 2011

Expected Date of Graduation

July 2011

Abstract

The point of this project was to develop a one-day orientation program designed specifically for Honors College students at Ball State University. Through personal experience, research of other programs, and interviews with various people, I have developed a plan that allows for Honors College students to attend orientation sessions on Saturdays in May on a first-come, first-serve basis. There will be fifty students allowed to sign up for each day and any students unable to attend in May will still be able to attend the regular orientation in June or July. This particular plan has been developed to hopefully attract the brightest minds to Ball State and to make Honors College students feel as though their personal attention and privileges begin before they even attend their first class.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, supervisor, and friend, Sarah Haley for all her help with this project. Without her available to listen to me bounce ideas around and complain, I would have lost my mind a long time ago.

I would also like to thank the Honors College for allowing me to work for them for three years and gain enough experience to feel comfortable creating a new plan for orientation.

Author's Statement

Why did I choose to make this plan?

I have been working with Honors orientation at Ball State for the past three years. During this time, I have been able to participate in various different aspects of orientation such as helping with the presentation on the first day, talking to the new freshmen about their experiences, and advising students. During this time, I observed the current structure of orientation from various points of view and spoke to my supervisors and decided that a plan for an orientation session specific to Honors College students would be beneficial to future incoming Honors students. To start my work on the project, I contacted schools in the Mid-American Conference to discuss their orientation plans for regular and Honors students at the universities. In addition, I spoke with parents and honors students who completed orientation in summer of 2011 to see what they would change about the program and what they felt may have been missing.

Why is this plan needed?

I decided to develop this new orientation plan as a way to attract bright, top-achieving students to the Honors College at Ball State. This plan will do that by providing Honors students with a much higher chance of being placed into courses that they want as opposed to whatever is left. I want Honors students to feel that they are receiving personal attention from the very start. Currently, Honors students are told about all the benefits they will receive from being in the Honors College, but they do not actually see those benefits go into action until their second semester, especially in the case of priority scheduling.

Another reason to develop this Honors-specific orientation is to get a step up on other schools. I looked into the orientation programs of all the schools in the Mid-American Conference and found that those that have Honors programs have a similar set-up for orientation where the Honors students are pulled away from the rest of the group only for their advising sessions. With this plan, Ball State would be able to make Honors students feel that they are important enough to the school to be given these special privileges when other schools are not going that extra mile. In addition, students who attend this early orientation will be able to go back to their high schools and tell other students about the special program that they attended, how helpful it was, and how they already have a college schedule. Granted, there will be some Honors students who do not see this plan as a privilege; and they will be able to complete the regular orientation in June or July.

What we need in order to make this work.

Making this orientation program work will require the cooperation of many different offices on campus. With the current system, staff members do not need to come in on Saturdays, which could pose a problem. What I propose is utilizing the Student Affairs graduate students. Many of the departments that would need to be represented in this program have graduate students from the Student Affairs program who would be knowledgeable enough to field the questions that families and students may have. For those departments who do not have graduate students, I would suggest allowing the staff members involved in the program to take a day off during the week in order to compensate for having to work on a Saturday. In addition, there would need to be dining halls that would be open on Saturday for students and

families to eat at for their lunch meal. If a continental breakfast were provided, then lunch should be the only meal that families would need to eat on campus.

Another important thing that would need to happen would be changing the way that foreign language and math placement tests are handled for these students. Currently, Honors students do not need to take the math placement test during orientation in order to get a schedule. They have been offered the opportunity to schedule that test for any time prior to the beginning of the semester. If we were able to keep math placement working this way, it would not cause any problems for this orientation program. As far as foreign language placement is concerned, the way this test works would need to change. I would suggest making the test available for these Honors students to take online. There are other schools in the MAC that have their students take their placement tests prior to arriving on the campus for orientation, and I think that Ball State could easily become one of those schools. In addition to foreign language and math placement, the departmental meetings for art, theatre, dance, and music would possibly need to change. If the staff members would be willing to come in on Saturday, then this schedule allows for the meetings to occur just as they do now. Otherwise, it may be necessary to come up with a way for those students to get their permissions for courses prior to arriving on campus for orientation.

Summer advisors are another important piece of this orientation plan. In the past, we have had John, Sarah, four summer advisors, Dr. Emert, and myself seeing students. With this staff, we can handle twenty-two students. For the Honors-only orientation, I would like to be able to advise fifty students in a day—twenty-five in the morning and twenty-five in the afternoon. In order for this to work, each session would require John and Sarah seeing two

students each, Dr. Emert would see one, and the four summer advisors plus a replacement for myself would need to see four students each. The advisors would have time between the morning and afternoon sessions in order to take a break and prepare for the next set of students.

We would also need a dedicated group of Honors students who would be willing to work on Saturdays in May. If these students were already hired as orientation leaders, this would make things a little easier. This plan would involve student workers who would be able to speak to the students in the morning, take the students around campus, participate in a panel for the parents, and help run the computer lab in the Honors house that is used for students to set up their e-mails as well as program in their schedules.

The changes that would be made in the orientation plan would involve finding a new way to represent different offices on campuses. Instead of having presentations given to students and families, I propose a set-up similar to the cardinal preview days that are held on Saturdays throughout the year. If students and families could visit the booths that they would like to hear from and then choose their own break-out sessions to participate in, they could avoid having to listen to information that they do not feel is important to them. I think that this set-up would work even better for this smaller group because people would be more likely to get their questions answered in a group of twenty-five students and families than they would in a group of one hundred or more students and families.

Certain programs that I feel are the ones families care about most will remain in the program and be conducted in a similar way. From my experience, it would appear that it is important for families to get to speak to or hear from Scholarships and Financial Aid, Housing,

and the Bursar specifically. In addition to those offices, Honors parents would be given the opportunity to tour the dorm with their student, which is something that does not happen now. This way, they can take measurements and begin to plan out what exactly will fit in the room when their student arrives.

Something extra that could be helpful for students and families when they attend orientation is for each student to be given a folder or binder with information about orientation in general as well as the student's major in particular. Information and handouts from departments on campus, Greek life, pride guides, and other information could also be included. This way, the student can remain organized and he or she will also have something tangible to take home and show to other students.

Another option that would not necessarily need to be included, but could help out would be to come up with a shuttle service from a couple of the closer hotels to the campus. If families chose to stay at a hotel where the Ball State shuttles would drive to, they would not have to worry about trying to find parking on campus or getting lost. Those families not familiar with the Ball State campus would be dropped off right at their registration point to make them more comfortable and hopefully prevent too many people from arriving late.

What is included in this literature?

The first piece of mail that Honors freshmen would receive would be a letter inviting them to participate in a May orientation date. Included with this first letter will be a sheet of paper where the students can designate that they would like to attend orientation in May and then rank the dates in order of compatibility with their schedules. The sheet will also allow for

students to choose to attend a regular orientation session in June or July or to let us know that they no longer wish to be involved in the Honors College.

The students who choose a May orientation date will next receive a confirmation letter that states the day in May to which they have been assigned as well as a couple more information sheets. These information sheets will include something similar to a “Frequently Asked Questions” sheet, a list of hotels near Ball State organized by distance from the campus, a sample orientation schedule, and a campus map.

When the students arrive for orientation, they will receive a booklet detailing the schedule for their time at orientation. Like the booklets that are used now, it contains a schedule with just the times and titles of sessions followed by pages of detailed descriptions of what to expect during those sessions. For the sessions that already exist, the descriptions were taken from the 2011 Orientation booklet.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
DEAN OF THE HONORS COLLEGE

Muncie, Indiana 47306-0185
Phone: 765-285-1024
Fax: 765-285-2072

July 18, 2011

Dear _____,

Congratulations again on your acceptance into the Honors College at Ball State University! Although it seems like August is forever away, the time is growing near for you to begin thinking about your upcoming summer orientation. As an Honors College student, you are being offered the opportunity to complete your orientation on a Saturday in May as opposed to June or July.

Why would you want to complete your orientation on a Saturday? Well, there are some perks that come along with choosing this earlier date:

- Your orientation will last one day as opposed to two
- There are far more seats available in classes for students who receive their schedules in May.
- The groups will be significantly smaller, leading to more opportunities for individual attention.
- You and your family will be able to choose which offices you would like to speak to while you're here.
- You'll have more time to spend with the Honors students that you will be living with in the fall.

Space for these May sessions is limited and will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis. Enclosed is a sheet that you can return to let us know what orientation session you are interested in. Be sure to respond promptly if a May orientation is something that you are interested in. Honors students who are unable to attend in May will attend a regular, two-day orientation in either June or July.

Best wishes,

Please fill out this form and return to Ball State University.

Name: _____

_____ I am interested in attending Honors orientation in May

_____ Please rank your preference for an orientation date on a scale of 1 being your first choice and 4 being your last choice.

_____ May 5, 2012

_____ May 12, 2012

_____ May 19, 2012

_____ May 26, 2012

_____ I would like to attend orientation during June or July.

_____ I am no longer planning to participate in the Honors College at Ball State.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
DEAN OF THE HONORS COLLEGE

Muncie, Indiana 47306-0185
Phone: 765-285-1024
Fax: 765-285-2072

July 18, 2011

Dear _____,

Thank you for choosing an orientation date in May. We currently have you scheduled to attend orientation on May __, 2012. If this date no longer works for you, please let us know quickly so we can work on an alternative plan. Otherwise, you will find enclosed some helpful information regarding your upcoming orientation session.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to give us a call at (765) 285-1024 or e-mail us at honorsorientation@email.com. We look forward to meeting you in May!

Best wishes,

HOTELS NEAR BALL STATE

Student Center Hotel

Third floor of the Pittenger Student Center

2000 West University Avenue

Muncie, IN 47306

(765) 285-1555

bsuhotel@gmail.com

Best Western

1.3 Miles from Ball Honors House

3011 W. Bethel Avenue

Muncie, IN 47304

(765) 282-0600

1-800-780-7234

book.bestwestern.com

Lee Inn and Suites

1.7 Miles from Ball Honors House

3302 Everbrook Ln.

Muncie, IN 47304

(765) 282-7557

leesinn.com

Days Inn

1.8 Miles from Ball Honors House

3509 N. Everbrook Ln.

Muncie, IN 47304

(765) 288-2311

daysinn.com

Signature Inn

1.9 Miles from Ball Honors House

3400 N. Chadam Ln.

Muncie, IN 47304

(765) 284-4200

muncie@signature-inns.com

jamesoninns.com

Fairfield Inn

2.0 Miles from Ball Honors House

4011 W. Bethel Ave.

Muncie, IN 47304

(765) 282-6666

mariott.com

Hampton Inn & Suites

2.0 Miles from Ball Honors House

4220 Bethel Ave.

Muncie, IN 47304

(765) 288-8500

hampton.hilton.com

Comfort Inn & Suites

2.1 Miles from Ball Honors House

3400 N. Marleon Dr.

Muncie, IN 47304

(765) 587-0294

choicehotels.com

WHAT SHOULD I BRING TO ORIENTATION?

- Comfortable shoes – There will be plenty of walking during orientation
- Layered clothing – It is best to be prepared for all types of Indiana weather changes
- Umbrella – Even if there is only a slight chance of rain, it is better to be prepared
- Tape measure and camera – They will come in handy when you get to view a DeHority dorm room
- Personal information required to open a bank account – Just in case you have time to do so during or after orientation
- AP scores, Dual Credit information, and anything else that you have done in high school that you believe will earn you college credit. If you do not have AP scores yet, have a general idea of how you think you did. This will help your advisor place you into the proper courses.

WHAT IS INCLUDED DURING ORIENTATION?

- A continental breakfast and lunch at a campus dining hall are included in the orientation program
- You will receive a parking pass unless you are staying at one of the hotels included on the shuttle route

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT DURING ORIENTATION?

- Included in this packet is a version of the orientation schedule. It should help you have a basic understanding of what will be happening during your time at orientation. Everything else will be explained in full when you arrive.
- There will be representatives available from multiple departments on campus including (but not limited to) Scholarships and Financial Aid, Career Center, Health Center, Bursar Office, and Housing and Residence Life.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE FOR ORIENTATION

- The most important thing for you to do prior to arriving for orientation is to complete the foreign language placement test if you intend to take a language at Ball State. If your advisor knows what level of foreign language you have placed into, he or she will be able to place you into a course immediately.

WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS BEFORE I ARRIVE?

- If you have any more questions about what to expect, feel free to e-mail honorsorientation@email.com or give us a call at (765) 285-1024.

Sample Orientation Schedule

STUDENT GROUP 1:

- 7:30 - 8:20 a.m. : Registration and Breakfast
- 8:30 - 9:55 a.m. : Welcome
- 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. : Academic planning
- 10:00 - 10:35 a.m. : Fine Arts Departmental Meetings
- 12:35 - 1:50 p.m. : Lunch
- 2:00 - 2:25 p.m. : Community tables
- 2:30 - 2:55 p.m. : Breakout Session #1
- 3:00 - 3:25 p.m. : Breakout Session #2
- 3:30 - 3:55 p.m. : Student ID photo
- 4:10 - 4:30 p.m. : DeHority Complex tour
- 4:40 - 5:00 p.m. : Closing Celebration (Student IDs)

STUDENT GROUP 2:

- 7:30 - 8:20 a.m. : Registration and Breakfast
- 8:30 - 9:55 a.m. : Welcome
- 10:00 - 10:25 a.m. : Community Tables
- 10:30 - 10:55 a.m. : Breakout Session #1
- 11:00 - 11:25 a.m. : Breakout Session #2
- 11:30 - 11:55 a.m. : Student ID photo
- 12:10 - 12:30 p.m. : DeHority Complex tour
- 12:35 - 1:50 p.m. : Lunch
- 2:00 - 4:30 p.m. : Academic planning
- 2:00 - 2:35 p.m. : Fine Arts Departmental Meetings
- 4:40 - 5:00 p.m. : Closing Celebration (Student IDs)


FAMILY GROUP 1:

7:30 - 8:20 a.m. : Registration and Breakfast
8:30 - 9:55 a.m. : Welcome
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. : Scholarships and Financial Aid Advising
10:00 - 10:35 a.m. : Fine Arts Departmental Meetings
10:00 - 10:40 a.m. : Student Panel: Questions and Answers
10:45 - 11:30 a.m. : Village Tour
11:40 a.m. - 12:10 p.m. : Money Matters: A Comprehensive Guide to Handling Your Finances
12:15 - 12:30 p.m. : Campus Tour
12:35 - 1:50 p.m. : Lunch
2:00 - 2:25 p.m. : Community tables
2:30 - 2:55 p.m. : Breakout Session #1
3:00 - 3:25 p.m. : Breakout Session #2
3:30 - 3:55 p.m. : Break
4:10 - 4:30 p.m. : DeHority Complex tour
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12:35 - 1:50 p.m. : Lunch
2:00 - 4:00 p.m. : Scholarships and Financial Aid Advising
2:00 - 2:35 p.m. : Fine Arts Departmental Meetings
2:00 - 2:40 p.m. : Student Panel: Questions and Answers
2:45 - 3:30 p.m. : Village Tour
3:40 - 4:10 p.m. : Money Matters: A Comprehensive Guide to Handling Your Finances
4:15 - 4:35 p.m. : Campus Tour
4:40 - 5:00 p.m. : Closing Celebration (Student IDs)

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

A photograph of a lecture hall or auditorium. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several audience members are visible, looking towards the stage. On the stage, a large projection screen displays a vibrant, abstract image with blue, red, and yellow patterns. The stage is lit with warm, orange light, and a few people can be seen standing on it. The overall atmosphere is that of a formal academic event.

2012

ORIENTATION

One-day Honors Handbook

EDUCATION REDEFINED

STUDENT GROUP 2

7:30—8:25 a.m. Registration and Breakfast

8:30—9:55 a.m. Welcome

10:00—10:25 a.m. Community Tables

10:30—10:55 a.m. Breakout Session #1

11:00—11:25 a.m. Breakout Session #2

11:30—11:55 a.m. Student ID photo

12:10—12:30 p.m. DeHorty Complex Tour

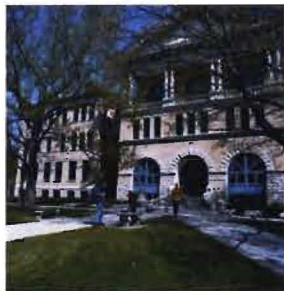
12:35—1:50 p.m. Lunch

2:00—4:30 p.m. Academic Planning

2:00—2:35 p.m. Fine Arts Departmental Meetings

4:40—5:00 p.m. Closing Celebration (Student IDs)

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL ORIENTATION EVENTS APPEAR ON PAGES 6-16.



FAMILY GROUP 2

7:30—8:20 a.m.	Registration and Breakfast
8:30—9:55 a.m.	Welcome
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2:45—3:30 p.m.	Village Tour
3:40—4:10 p.m.	Money Matters: A Comprehensive Guide to Handling Your Finances
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DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL ORIENTATION EVENTS APPEAR ON PAGES 6-16.

12:35 - 1:50 p.m. : Lunch

Woodworth complex

Students and families will regroup for a delicious meal at Woodworth Dining. This dining area offers everything from burgers and fries to salad spinning to the El Fire Dragon grill which alternates between Mexican and Asian cuisines.

2:00 - 2:25 p.m. : Community tables

Student Center Ballroom

During this time, students and families will have the opportunity to visit booths from departments across campus to receive information on the Career Center, Counseling Center, Scholarships and Financial Aid, Greek Life, Student Affairs, Disabled Student Development, and Housing. They will also be given the opportunity to register a vehicle with Parking Services.

2:30 - 2:55 p.m. : Breakout Session #1

TBA

Students and families will be able to choose one of the departments from the Community Tables session and attend a smaller, more in-depth discussion on how that particular program works. This will be a great opportunity to ask questions that may not have been answered online or elsewhere.

3:00 - 3:25 p.m. : Breakout Session #2

TBA

For this second session, students and families will be able to choose a second department from those available during the Community Tables session in order to have questions answered.

3:30 - 3:55 p.m. : Student ID photo

Lucina Hall

Students will be lead to Lucina Hall where they will have a photo taken for their student ID. The finished ID will be picked up during the closing celebration.

4:10 - 4:30 p.m. : DeHority Complex tour

DeHority Complex

Students will rejoin families and head over to the DeHority Complex where they will have the opportunity to view a furnished dorm room. This is an excellent time to take photos so that students will have an idea of exactly what they will have room for during their stay in the dorm.

4:40 - 5:00 p.m. : Closing Celebration (Student IDs)

Pruis Hall

Orientation has almost come to a close! During this final session, students will be given their student IDs as well as the freshman reader for the year.

12:35 - 1:50 p.m. : Lunch

Woodworth complex

Students and families will regroup for a delicious meal at Woodworth Dining. This dining area offers everything from burgers and fries to salad spinning to the El Fire Dragon grill which alternates between Mexican and Asian cuisines.

2:00 - 4:30 p.m. : Academic planning

Ball Honors House

Students will come to the Ball Honors House where they will have a chance to interact with the other students in a more relaxed setting. The advisors for the summer will be introduced and each student will be given a 30-minute appointment with an advisor. During this appointment, students will be given the opportunity to work together with their advisors in order to choose courses and times for a schedule that the students will be happy with. After the advising appointment is complete, students will be given information for their new Ball State e-mail account

2:00 - 2:35 p.m. : Fine Arts Departmental Meetings

School of Music Majors/Minors: Hargreaves Music Building, Room 200

Students majoring in music must attend this departmental meeting. They will receive important information about departmental requirements and advice on course selection. Family members are welcome to attend.

Department of Art Admitted Majors: Art and Journalism Building, Room 400

Students who have been admitted to the art program must attend this departmental meeting. They will receive important information about major requirements and a permission sheet needed to enroll in art courses. Due to limited space, this meeting is for students only.

Department of Theatre and Dance Majors/Minors: Strother Theatre

Students majoring or minoring in theatre or dance must attend this departmental meeting. They will receive important information about the department as well as a schedule and a permission sheet, which is needed to enroll in assigned theatre and/or dance classes. Family members are encouraged to attend.

4:40 - 5:00 p.m. : Closing Celebration (Student IDs)

Pruis Hall

Orientation has almost come to a close! During this final session, students will be given their student IDs as well as the freshman reader for the year

10:00 - 10:40 a.m. : Student Panel: Questions and Answers

Art and Journalism Building, Room 175

Our family orientation leaders—joined by staff from the Division of Student Affairs—are ready to provide honest answers to your questions about the Ball State experience.

10:45 - 11:30 a.m. : Village Tour

University Avenue

Families will have a chance to explore what the Village has to offer. Try a cup of coffee at the MT Cup, grab some ice cream at Grandma Betty's, pick up some Ball State apparel at CBX and T.I.S., and get information from Chase Bank or the Ball State Federal Credit Union about opening an account in Muncie for your student.

11:40 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. : Money Matters: A Comprehensive Guide to Handling Your Finances

Pruis Hall

In this session, you will learn about college costs, Cardinal Cash, billing procedures, payment options, and financial aid.

12:15 - 12:30 p.m. : Campus Tour

All over BSU

Families will be given the opportunity to take an optional tour of the Ball State campus. This will be a shortened tour, but will still allow time to get a feel for where the buildings on campus are located.

12:35 - 1:50 p.m. : Lunch

Woodworth complex

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2:00 - 2:25 p.m. : Community tables

Student Center Ballroom

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NOTES:



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DeHority Complex

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2:00 - 4:00 p.m. : Scholarships and Financial Aid Advising

Lucina Hall, room 245

The Scholarships and Financial Aid office will be open during this time for families to stop by to meet one-on-one with staff members in order to have any questions they may have about scholarships, payments, and loans. This is not a required stop during the program, just an available service for families.

2:00 - 2:35 p.m. : Fine Arts Departmental Meetings

School of Music Majors/Minors: Hargreaves Music Building, Room 200

Students majoring in music must attend this departmental meeting. They will receive important information about departmental requirements and advice on course selection. Family members are welcome to attend.

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Students who have been admitted to the art program must attend this departmental meeting. They will receive important information about major requirements and a permission sheet needed to enroll in art courses. Due to limited space, this meeting is for students only.

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2:00 - 2:40 p.m. : Student Panel: Questions and Answers

Art and Journalism Building, Room 175

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NOTES:

